

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 000643

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RO, UNSC

SUBJECT: ROMANIA AND THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

REF: BUCHAREST 6673

1. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARMITAGE HAS WRITTEN LETTER TO AMBASSADOR BARNES ON SUBJECT OF FORTHCOMING ROMANIAN MEMBERSHIP IN UN SECURITY COUNCIL (SC). SINCE THE LETTER WILL NOT ARRIVE IN TIME TO BE OF USE IN CONVERSATIONS INDICATED REFTEL, FOLLOWING BACKGROUND MATERIAL MAY BE USEFUL TO EMBASSY IN PREPARING FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH ACTING FONMIN PACOSTE.

2. ROMANIA WILL BE MEMBER OF SC FOR TWO YEARS BEGINNING JANUARY 1. USG HOPES TO ESTABLISH CONSULTATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH ROMANIANS SIMILAR TO THAT WE HAVE HAD WITH THEM CONCERNING CSCE AND ON THEIR GENERAL ASSEMBLY AGENDA ITEM
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ON STRENGTHENING ROLE OF THE UN. WHILE NEW YORK WILL BE

PRINCIPAL FOCAL POINT OF CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN US, EMBASSY WILL BE IN BEST POSITION TO ADVISE US ON PROBABLE ROMANIAN REACTIONS TO SPECIFIC ISSUES AND ON HOW BEST TO APPROACH ROMANIANS. YOU WILL BE AS FULLY INFORMED AS THE OFTEN FAST-MOVING SITUATION IN THE SC PERMITS.

3. UNDER THE UN CHARTER, THE SC IS IN CONTINUOUS SESSION. MEETINGS ARE CALLED BY ITS PRESIDENT AT THE REQUEST OF ANY MEMBER, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, OR THE SECRETARY GENERAL. FORMAL MEETINGS ARE SCHEDULED BY THE PRESIDENT AFTER CONSULTATION WITH COUNCIL MEMBERS AND MAY BE PRECEDED BY INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS. THE PRESIDENCY ROTATES ALPHABETICALLY ON A MONTHLY BASIS, CARRYING OVER FROM YEAR TO YEAR. THE 1976 ALPHABETICAL ROTATION GIVES ROMANIA THE PRESIDENCY IN DECEMBER. NINE AFFIRMATIVE VOTES ARE REQUIRED FOR ANY ACTION BY THE COUNCIL, INCLUDING CONCURRING VOTES OF PERMANENT MEMBERS OF COUNCIL ON ALL SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES. HOWEVER, UNDER A "GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT" THAT HAS BEEN OBSERVED SINCE VERY EARLY DAYS OF UN, ABSTENTIONS DO NOT CONSTITUTE VETOES. REQUIREMENT FOR NINE AFFIRMATIVE VOTES FOR ACTION MEANS THAT SEVEN ABSTENTIONS ARE AS EFFECTIVE AS A PERMANENT MEMBER'S NEGATIVE VOTE IN PREVENTING COUNCIL ACTION.

4. USG PREFERS TO HEAD OFF UNDESIRABLE COUNCIL ACTION IN THIS WAY RATHER THAN THROUGH VETO. WITH SIX VOTES FROM UK, US, FRANCE, ITALY, SWEDEN, AND JAPAN, ROMANIA MAY BE KEY SEVENTH ABSTENTION. COUNCIL HAS ACTED QUITE FREQUENTLY ON CONSENSUS BASIS. USG CONSIDERS THIS A DESIRABLE PROCEDURE WHEREVER ISSUE LENDS ITSELF TO CONSENSUS SOLUTION.

5. COMPOSITION OF SC NEXT YEAR IS NOT TOO FAVORABLE TO US. ROMANIA, AS EE REPRESENTATIVE, IS PREFERABLE TO ANY OTHER EE STATE. HOWEVER, EE'S GENERALLY SUPPORT NON-ALIGNED ON ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO LATTER. FACT THAT ROMANIA IS SEEKING TO STRENGTHEN ITS NON-ALIGNED TIES, INCLUDING ATTAINMENT OF OBSERVER STATUS AT NON-ALIGNED MEETINGS, MAKES US QUESTION HOW HELPFUL WE CAN

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EXPECT ROMANIA TO BE ON SUCH ISSUES. WE NOTE THAT GOR HAS ALREADY RECOGNIZED PEOPLES' REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA. EMBASSY SHOULD URGE ROMANIA TO WORK WITH NON-ALIGNED MEMBERS OF SC AND, TOGETHER WITH PAKISTAN, TO EXERCISE A MODERATING INFLUENCE ON THEM--ESPECIALLY ON MIDDLE EASTERN AND SOUTH AFRICAN ISSUES, AVOIDING WHERE POSSIBLE CONFRONTATIONAL SITUATIONS WHICH RESULT IN RESOLUTIONS WHICH ARE VETOED.

6. SC WILL MEET IN LATE JANUARY ON NAMIBIA AND RHODESIA. ANGOLA ISSUE COULD ALSO BE BROUGHT TO SC IN NEAR FUTURE, DEPENDING ON OUTCOME OF OAU MEETINGS IN MID-JANUARY. MIDDLE EAST QUESTION, WITH PLO PARTICIPATION, NOW FIRMLY SCHEDULED FOR SC CONSIDERATION BEGINNING JANUARY 12. THIS DISCUSSION WILL BE OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO USG FROM STANDPOINT OF OUR EFFORTS TO BUILD TOWARD A LASTING PEACE IN THAT AREA. WE ARE ENCOURAGED TO HOPE THAT ROMANIA MIGHT EXERCISE A MODERATING INFLUENCE IN THIS DISCUSSION AND MIGHT AT LEAST ABSTAIN ON ANY RESOLUTION ON MIDDLE EAST UNACCEPTABLE TO US. OUR ENCOURAGEMENT RISES NOT ONLY FROM FACT THAT ROMANIA MAINTAINS DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL BUT ALSO FROM EMBASSY'S REPORT OF PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU'S YEAR-END REVIEW BEFORE THE GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, IN WHICH HE APPARENTLY DEPLORED SOME RECENT ASSEMBLY ACTIONS WITH RESPECT TO ISRAEL AS CONTRARY TO SPIRIT OF UN CHARTER. INGERSOLL

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